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Real-Life Spy Thrillers Produce a Courthouse Star

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BALTIMORE, Oct. 30—Thirteen months ago, the only thing Michael Schatzow knew about espionage was what he gleaned from spy novels.

Today, the 36-year-old federal prosecutor, whose junior high school hero was James Bond, has three real-life espionage convictions to his credit: Soviet spies John Anthony Walker Jr. and his son, Michael Lance Walker, who pleaded guilty in federal court here Monday; and Navy intelligence analyst Samuel Loring Morison, convicted earlier this month for leaking three spy satellite photographs to a British magazine.

Schatzow, who said he "always wanted to work on an espionage case," spent long hours

closeted with intelligence experts to prepare for the Walker and Morison trials.

"It really is incredible . . . what you get confirmed in terms of all the spy novels that you've read," he said in an interview today.

A District native and graduate of the University of Chicago Law School, Schatzow has become something of a star in the halls of the federal courthouse here.

"Hey, how are you, I saw you on TV," said a grand juror. "Don't take any crap from 'em, Mike," offered a passing lawyer. He was alluding to Schatzow's typically acerbic retort to criticism of the Walker plea agreement by Navy Secretary John F. Lehman Jr., in which Schatzow said: "This is the kind of crap that makes those of us out in the field happy not to be in Washington."

Schatzow, who has a reputation as a thor-

ough and aggressive prosecutor, began his legal career defending the accused instead of trying to put them in jail.

His boss in the federal public defender's office here was Charles G. Bernstein, who went head-to-head against his former assistant as Michael Walker's defense lawyer.

Bernstein said he hired Schatzow in 1975 because "I wanted a younger, more liberal type . . . He'd come in and say things like, 'Chuck, I got a bank robber today for sentencing, and I'm going to tell the judge: The only thing worse than robbing a bank, your honor, is owning one.'"

Schatzow freely agrees that his politics have shifted somewhat over the years. "I was one of those guys who believed the redistribution of wealth was a great thing as long as I could keep driving my MG—and yes, my hair

was considerably longer," he said, passing a hand over short brown curls with a light dusting of gray.

Schatzow went from demonstrating against the Vietnam War in college to the Morison trial, the first case accusing an individual of espionage for giving national defense documents to the press since Daniel Ellsberg was charged with leaking the Pentagon Papers. But he said he did not "go over to the enemy," as Bernstein terms it, because he tired of defending the guilty.

"That part of it never bothered me," he said. Instead, he said, he decided after representing a codefendant in the Marvin Mandel political corruption trial that he wanted to try more complicated cases than the run-of-the-mill bank robberies and narcotics charges

that were the staples of the public defender's office.

The cases that interested him, Schatzow said, were those "where the issue was not whether you had the right person in the courtroom, but whether what the person had done was a crime."

From that perspective, the Morison case, which marked the first espionage conviction for leaking documents to the press, was much more of a challenge than the essentially cut-and-dried case against the Walkers.

Schatzow's familiarity with the espionage laws as a result of the Morison case—and a lucky hallway encounter—landed him the case that resulted in invitations to appear on network news shows and a flood of telephone messages that he has given up trying to answer.

He was walking into work May 20, the morning of John Walker's arrest, when he bumped into fellow prosecutor Robert N. McDonald.

McDonald told him, "You're just the person I was looking for." Schatzow headed to McDonald's office and met with weary FBI agents who had been up all night, first following Walker, then arresting him.

The full impact of the case didn't dawn on him immediately, he said. "I knew it was important . . . but the first thing I think that really brought it home to me was when they exercised the search warrant [on the manila envelope that John Walker had dropped when he was arrested] and we saw the drop instructions" for leaving the package of classified documents.

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In January, Schatzow, a Baltimore resident who now earns about \$68,000, is leaving the U.S. attorney's office to join a law firm. A name partner at the firm is Arnold M. Weiner, Mandel's defense lawyer in the trial that spurred Schatzow to become a prosecutor.

"We can't wait till he comes over," Weiner said. At the Mandel trial, he said, Schatzow was "brand new but he was terrific."

Last night, Schatzow, the father of a 13-month-old daughter, Maggie, and a 3½-year-old son, Adam, had a chance to do some nonwork reading for the first time in months. His choice: "The Hunt for Red October," a spy thriller recommended by one of John Walker's lawyers.



MICHAEL SCHATZOW
... James Bond was his hero